



Our Progress So far

2021-22



**Zero Carbon
Shropshire**

Executive Summary

It's just over a year since we wrote the Zero Carbon Shropshire (ZCS) plan. Since then we've:

- Set-up 20 projects based on the actions proposed in the plan
- Achieved charitable status, a business plan, and clear social values
- Launched Generation Zero Carbon Shropshire
- Established a new group for businesses and social enterprises
- Nurtured the development of climate action across Shropshire building effective relationships with key partners

Our challenges have included:

- Over-reliance on a dedicated pool of volunteers
- Lack of funding for key projects
- Measuring the carbon implications of our work - this is difficult!
- Inability to hold public events owing to the pandemic
- A disconnect between government zero-carbon targets and proposals such as the North West Relief Road.

Looking ahead, our focus will continue to be:

- Bringing communities together to take action on climate change
- Acting as a catalyst to mobilise public opinion, through inspiring and empowering people
- Being a voice for positive change on the climate and ecological emergency



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Task Force

The task force is our management team, made up of the leads from all of our working groups. Our philosophy has been to empower each working group to drive forward the work, without waiting for direction from the centre. As a result, we've been able to adapt our approach as required to tackle the highly complex challenges of climate change and the loss of nature.

To date we have:

- Set-up the charity and appointed a trustee board
- Established core structures, processes, and procedures
- Co-ordinated activities between the working groups
- Written a business plan, and agreed the projects
- Defined the core values for the organisation
- Enhanced local media coverage of the COP26 Conference

Looking ahead, we need to focus on:

- Recruitment of additional trustees and expertise
- Capacity building (funding, people, and partnerships)
- Much greater community and business engagement



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Transport



Our Transport group considers how we can travel around while minimising our carbon emissions.

Key achievements to date have included:

- Mobilising people across Shropshire to take part in the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and Bus Back Better consultations
- Building consultation and liaison with leading specialists, councils, and environmental groups
- Input to critical transport initiatives including Agile Streets, North West Road, Shrewsbury Big Town Plan, Campaign for 20mph speed limits, etc
- Establishing a list of EV owners who are happy to be consulted by those considering switching

Looking ahead we need to:

- Recruit more group members
- Increase dialogue with the councils and local businesses
- Focus on the issues of the moment, e.g. Local Transport Plans, Public transport and active travel, Carbon consequences of road building, building capacity to support EV rollout, etc
- Improve the co-ordination of action across Shropshire and beyond
- Be a catalyst for a mass movement raising concerns about initiatives that add CO2 emissions
- Build stronger links between transport and spatial planning (Many new housing developments located in the countryside or on the outskirts of towns are adding to congestion, carbon emissions and are trapping communities into car-dependence)



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Buildings

Our Buildings group aims to address the climate crisis by promoting energy-efficient buildings in Shropshire.

To date, the group has led or participated in many projects including:

- A Shropshire Energy Map showing the potential in the county for renewable energy (led by the Energy group)
- The Green Open Doors event, allowing the public to explore energy efficient local homes
- Distributing household advice leaflets through Coop stores
- Reviewing local planning applications to ensure they are sustainable
- Working with Shropshire Council and its partners on a heat network in Shrewsbury to harness the heat generated by the Battlefield incinerator
- Working with Shropshire Council to promote energy efficient schools across the county
- Supporting the Marches Energy Agency (MEA) on a major retrofit project for local homes, based on a grant of £250-£500K to build retrofit capacity within the county

Looking ahead, our intent is to continue with key projects including:

- The heat network in Shrewsbury
- Repeating the Green Doors event
- Continuing to monitor planning applications
- Providing expertise and leadership to the MEA retrofit work
- Decarbonisation plans for several educational establishments

And we'll be improving engagement with our partners, and recruiting more expertise to the team.



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Consumption and Resources

This group focusses on the consumption of resources in Shropshire.

To date, the group has made good progress with key initiatives including:

- Publishing guides and useful links to support people in making personal choices on carbon emissions
- Promoting a Shropshire green guide, "Mossy Life" produced by Caroline Talbot
- Creating several toolkits, including materials to set-up a repair cafe and to initiate a Carbon Watchers project. (Carbon Watchers has recently been taken up in Telford & Wrekin, through local community climate champions, working with the Telford & Wrekin Borough Climate Change Partnership)

Looking ahead, the group will:

- Complete a review and update of all the information sheets on the website, including those produced by Veolia on waste management, textiles, etc.
- Increase our focus on reducing food waste with Shrewsbury Food Hub, working closely with the new Shropshire Good Food Partnership led by Jenny Roquette (Land and Biodiversity group), Master composters, Rubbish ambassadors, Street allotments, etc, across the county



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Land and Biodiversity

This group focuses on land use, and how to address the biodiversity crisis in Shropshire.

To date, the group has delivered several key projects including:

- The Shropshire Love Nature festival, with over 40 public events
- The establishment of a Good Food Partnership for Shropshire
- An assessment of the carbon sequestration potential of different land management options
- An assessment of new tree and woodland establishment, and the associated sequestration of carbon

Moving forwards, the group has identified six top issues to address:

- Explore how Shropshire's natural environment has the potential to be a significant carbon sink
- Develop the potential for trees and hedgerows to tackle the climate emergency
- Support the transition away from a high carbon society through innovative solutions in agriculture
- Present the opportunities and challenges for land management in a publicly accessible manner, identifying "what good looks like"
- Promote the Nature Recovery Network

All this work is guided by two key principles:

- Base all our work on firm evidence and strive to be an honest broker of the facts
- Have a clear communications strategy that targets key audiences on the key priorities



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Energy

The Energy group focusses on how we generate and use energy in Shropshire.

The group's key successes to date include:

- The completion of a very successful energy mapping project for Shropshire, which is generating interest from landowners and potential users
- Building relationships with Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) (Western Power Distribution, Scottish Power Energy Networks)
- Starting to engage with developers and renewable energy projects

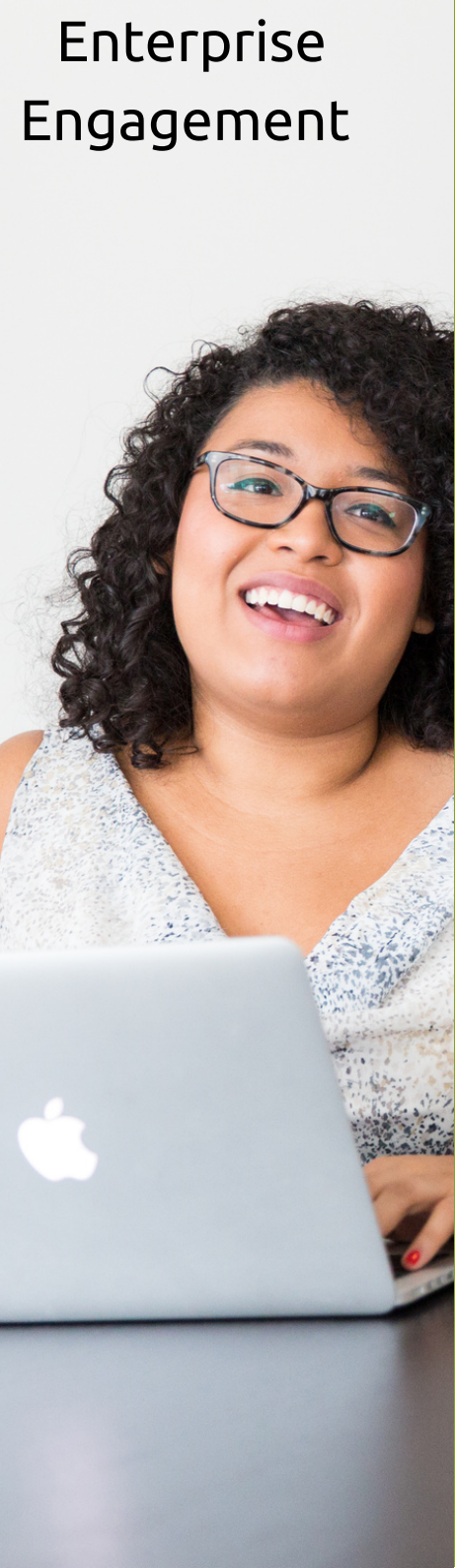
Moving forwards, many of the challenges centre on the limited capacity of the existing grid:

- We're already seeing attempts to connect solar schemes rejected by the DNOs as the network capacity isn't adequate
- DNOs are constrained in how they invest in infrastructure by Ofgem and national policy - new thinking is needed
- Communities want renewables, but there are delays providing connectivity
- We need to create pressure in the community, and find ways of moving the DNOs forward

Some solar farm proposals are encountering negative, often ill-informed responses, such as New Works in Telford and we need to consider how this can be managed. Also, the price of electricity is not dependent on how it is generated at the moment. There ought to be incentives to shift to renewables, and this needs to be addressed.



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This group focusses on how we can best engage with businesses and organisations. Most businesses in the county are Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). Group members have access to a wide network across the county through paid and voluntary roles and membership organisations. We will continue to extend membership to include sector specific representation.

To date, the work has included:

- Setting up a research project and workshops with the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) to investigate the barriers enterprises face in getting started with their net zero journey. We're now addressing the findings.
- Running many business engagement meetings throughout the year, notably a very successful conference hosted by Aico in Oswestry and two workshops on climate change with the Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) (this organisation addresses the voluntary sector and social enterprises).

In 2022 we're focussing on the following initiatives:

- Cool Shropshire (an environmental/sustainability advice platform for SMEs which will include access to carbon foot-printing). This project has recently received funding from both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils, and will be launched in the spring
- Promoting a model on the ZCS website that identifies the key elements of an enterprise's zero carbon journey. The webpage will be populated with links to provide further support around each element
- Rolling out Carbon Literacy Training for informing and educating staff to develop a shared language and understanding of the urgency of responding to the climate and nature crises. This includes a free getting started guide.
- The Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses is working with us too, and we'll be looking to develop this relationship further.

We're finding that the UK government target of 2050 is slowing businesses down, as it appears to delay the requirement for action. So, we'll be considering how we best address this too.



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Communications

The group has attempted to cover a very broad remit to date, including: internal and external communications, marketing, volunteer recruitment, and delivery of public engagement projects.

Key achievements have included:

- Doubling the number of ZCS pledgers to over 500 and supporting the launch of Generation Zero Carbon Shropshire
- Promoting ZCS's aims through social media, the website, the CommonPlace consultation platform, a monthly newsletter to supporters, and by building close relationships with local print media and radio (over 20 radio interviews were conducted during COP26)
- Supporting public events including stalls at Shropshire Goes Electric in Shrewsbury, the Bayston Hill Big Green Week, The Marches School Climate Fair in Oswestry, The Market Drayton Go-Green Festival, Lighting up Shrewsbury ahead of COP26, etc

Moving ahead, the Communications team will:

- Focus primarily on internal and external communications, based on a defined communications plan for 2022
- Create communications toolkits and branded materials
- Develop the capacity of the Working Groups through media training and creation of a content bank
- Provide points of contact within the comms team for each working group
- Encourage sharing of information on internal IT platforms such as Slack and the GDrive
- Adopt the use of communications plans for projects
- Promote the net zero message using compelling content, through video, social media, our public stalls, peer-to-peer events.
- Increase impact by adopting a more professional brand image



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GenZCS



GenZCS represents the youth voice, and has four main goals:

- **Fast Fashion:** The aim is to educate our age group about the environmental impacts of Fast Fashion. We held a very successful clothes swap in September, raising awareness about the carbon impacts of fast fashion and funds for Cuan Wildlife.
- **Education:** this covers all age groups, focussing on the impact of carbon emissions on the planet, through social media. We're trying to engage all age groups, but bring the views of young people into this as well. We ran library workshops for young people across the county during the summer.
- **Active travel:** It's not always possible to cycle or walk to college in a large rural county, so we're also focussing on public transport.
- **Waste:** This is the main focus for the start of 2022. This has a huge impact on carbon emissions in Shropshire, so we've started raising ideas through social media on how people can tackle this personally.

In 2022, we're also seeking to increase our membership. Members are currently working or at college, which doesn't leave much time to spare, so we're hoping to attract new members who can spend an hour or two each month helping to spread our messages.

In summary, we've achieved a lot over to date, and we are excited to see what we can do in 2022!



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Conclusions

The highlight of the last year has been the outstanding work of our volunteers across the county. Across Shropshire, local people and organisations are taking action on climate change and to improve the natural environment.

Our partnership approach has given us access to and support from key stakeholders across the county, enabling projects such as the Shropshire Love Nature Festival, Energy mapping, Retrofit, and the setting up of the Good Food Partnership for Shropshire.

While as a county we are still falling short of the actions needed, the attitude and commitment of our volunteers and partners gives us hope that by working together, we can overcome the challenges ahead.



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